

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*Nowadays, studies of historic sites such as Tweed's Tavern often take place as part of the process that evaluates the environmental impacts of publicly-funded projects such as highway improvements. Since the 1960s, all Federal-funded or authorized undertakings have to make sure that their effects on important historic "properties" (which can mean anything from a scatter of prehistoric stone tools to a historic home or a battlefield) are properly taken into account. If the effects are adverse, affecting the setting or integrity of the historic properties, or requiring their removal, then good-faith efforts must be made to avoid or reduce these impacts.*

*This report describes how obligations to one historic site have been met by the Federal Highway Authority through the agency of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). DelDOT, carrying out its responsibilities to create and maintain a safe and effective highway system in Delaware, used Federal funding to help meet the cost of road improvements to State Route 7 (Limestone Road), including its intersection with Valley Road.*

*At the Valley Road intersection lay a two-story stuccoed house, converted into a office in recent years (Plate 1.1). Research had identified this house as Tweed's Tavern, an inn known to have been in existence by 1799 and to have been a log structure. Other buildings, including a "cookery", were known to have existed on the site, but were no longer standing.*

*Preliminary investigations in the area of the tavern property took place in 1985-6, but these were very limited in scale. A phased sequence of research and of progressively more detailed archaeological and architectural investigation began in 1997 and continued, with some breaks, into the summer of 2000. At this time the tavern building was moved to a new location and some final archaeological documentation was done.*

*Completion of the field investigations was, however, only the beginning of the work. A program of additional historical research, comparative architectural studies, artifact analysis, and some oral history interviews was completed in 2002 and 2003, in order to develop as complete a picture as possible of this historic site, whose official and rather cumbersome title is the Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]. These various research tasks were performed within the framework of an overall research design that was intended to contribute significantly to our understanding of Tweed's Tavern and its place in the history of the county, state and wider region.*

## A. THE SITE AND THE PROJECT

Until the summer of 2000 the Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18] lay on the western side of the intersection of Delaware State Route 7 (Limestone Road) and Valley Road in Hockessin, Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware (Figures 1.1, 1.2; Plates 1.1 – 1.4).

The site is located in the Piedmont physiographic zone, an area of rolling topography with typical elevations of about 350 to 400 feet above sea level. The site itself lay in a shallow valley at about 250 feet above sea level and on the southeastern side of a small and much-altered tributary stream that runs southeast and northeast and joins Mill Creek about 4000 feet to the east. The land rises gently on all sides of the site except to the east, with the steepest grade being to the southwest, where Valley Road ascends a moderate slope. To the north, Limestone Road ascends a steady grade towards the Pennsylvania state line, one mile away. Soils on the site are Chester Loam (ChB2), while the surrounding areas are predominantly Glenelg and Manor loams (Gm series) and Glenville silt loams (GN Series). These are all grouped into the Glenelg-Manor-Chester Association of well-drained, medium textured soils of the Piedmont. Historically, these areas have been intensively used for mixed farming for crops, forage and livestock (Matthews and Lavoie 1970: 2 and Sheet 5).

The increasing suburbanization of this part of Northern Delaware has resulted in Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) projects for the widening of Route 7 and for improvements to a number of intersections, including Valley Road. Since these improvements were in receipt of Federal funds through the Federal Highway Authority (FHWA), the work was subject to the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). These provisions required the identification of historic properties in areas affected by the road improvements, evaluation of their eligibility for the

National Register of Historic Places, and the appropriate treatment of significant properties adversely affected by the highway improvements.

The two-story log house known as Tweed's Tavern was built in the mid 1790s, and a tavern is first mentioned at this location in 1799. It continued to operate as a tavern under Tweed ownership apparently until 1831. After this point it appears to have become an agricultural property, although a probate inventory of 1852 details no less than 18 chairs in the house, which might suggest some continuing public function.

Archaeologically, the most important stratigraphy and artifacts came from a series of drains and a sinkhole. The latter contained a substantial artifact assemblage provisionally dated to 1780-1850 (although subsequently determined to have an end date later in the 19th century) and assumed at this point to be associated chiefly with the tavern. Fragmentary remains of outbuildings were identified, but these lacked coherence.

This report is the documentation and analysis of the treatment of the Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and of Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18], both of which were determined to be eligible for the National Register.

## B. PREVIOUS WORK AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROJECT

The archaeological, historical and archaeological investigation of the Tweed's Tavern property began in 1985-86. At that time, preliminary surveys were undertaken along Route 7 from Milltown to the Pennsylvania state line in order to provide information on cultural resources as part of the collection of data for highway improvements. In 1985 the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological research (UDCAR) excavated five one meter square test units around the outside of the house. It was concluded from these investigations that the area around the house was extensively disturbed. Two smaller test units were subsequently opened in the crawlspace

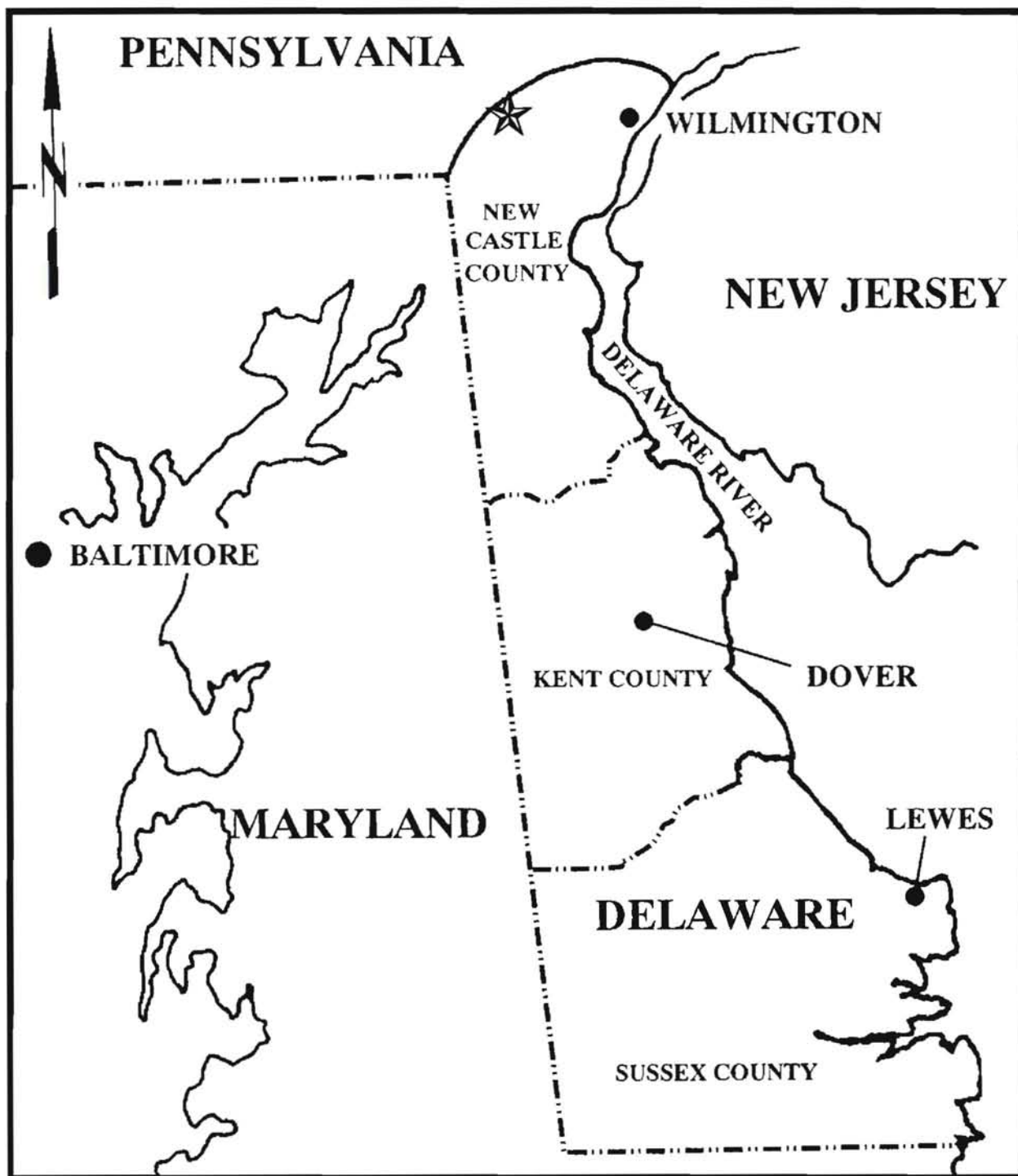


Figure 1.1. General Location of Project Area (Starred).

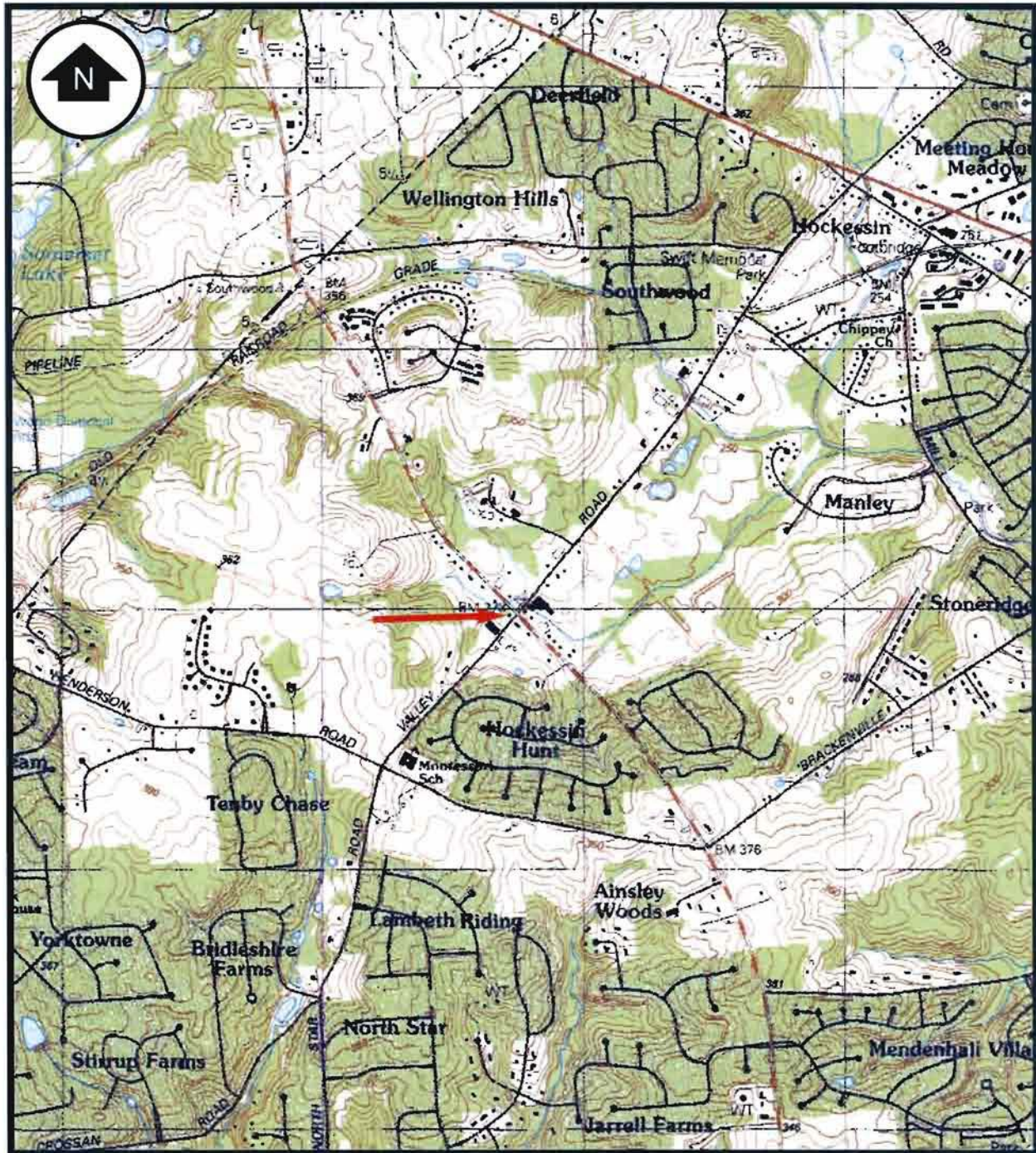


Figure 1.2. Detailed Location of Project Area (Indicated by Red Arrow). Limestone Road (State Route 7) runs from northwest to southeast across the map and crosses the Pennsylvania State Line a mile north of the Tweed's Tavern Site. Valley Road runs southwestwards up onto the higher ground typical of this part of the Delaware Piedmont. This area has become considerably more built up since this map was last revised in 1986. Scale: 1 Inch: 1000 Feet. Source: 7.5' USGS Kennett Square, PA.-Del. Quadrangle 1954 (Photorevised 1986).

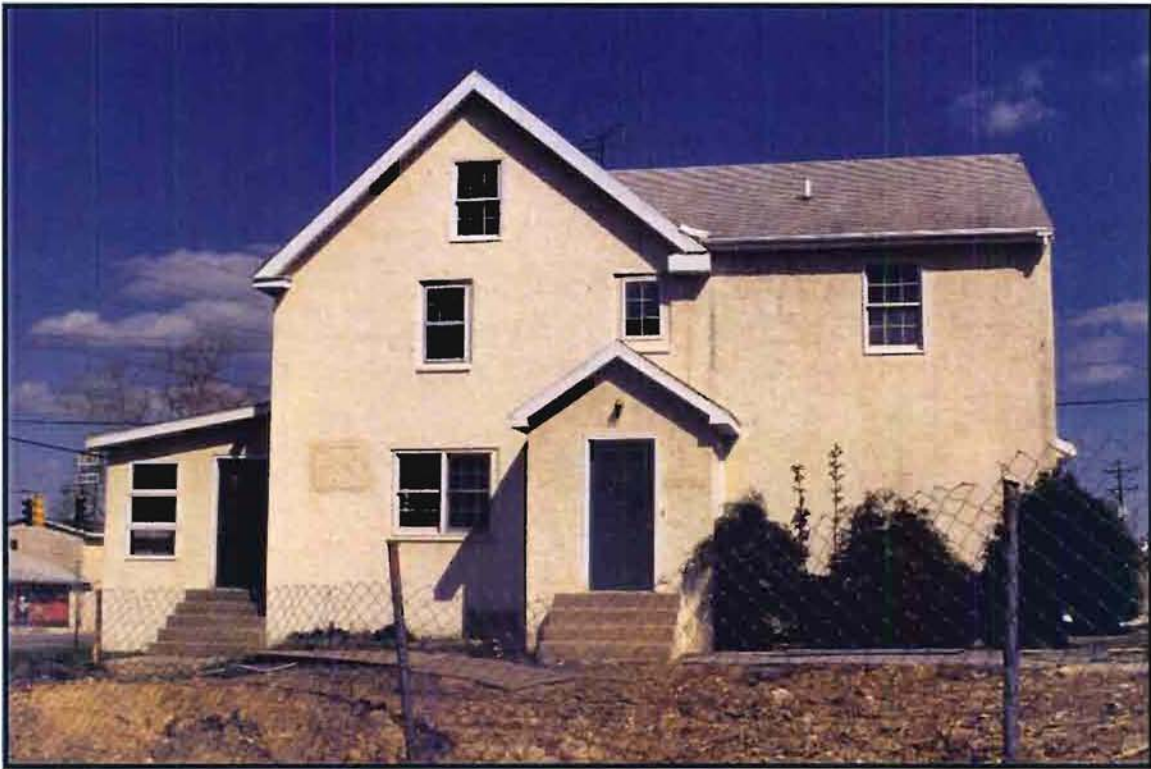


Plate 1.1. The Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: This is view of the house from the northwest in the spring of 2000, a few weeks prior to its removal from the site. This photograph illustrates how well disguised such historic houses can be under later additions and alterations. None of the visible portions of the house on the image show the actual log structure that was Tweed's Tavern: that lies about 16 feet behind the gabled section in the center of the photograph. The gabled section itself was added on to the log section in the early 1950s. The wing to the right was added in 1981-2, and the single-storey porch on the left about the same time. In the foreground is the backfilled area of the sinkhole that produced the majority of the 19th-century artifacts from the archaeological excavations. Photograph courtesy of New Castle County Historic Review Board.



Plate 1.2. View of exterior of Tweed's Tavern looking southwest (Photographer: Dawn Turner, February 1999)[HRI Neg.# 98039/17:7].



Plate 1.3. Exterior view of Tweed's Tavern looking northwest (Photographer: Dawn Turner, February 1999)[HRI Neg.# 98039/01:03].



Plate 1.4. Exterior view of Tweed's Tavern looking east (Photographer: Dawn Turner, February 1999)[HRI Neg.# 98039/01:13].

under the 1950s addition, an area previously occupied by a lean-to. These smaller excavations identified a range of artifacts from the top 20 cm of soil beneath the crawlspace (Catts, Shaffer and Custer 1986:121-129). Phase II testing was recommended for a future date when access would be easier.

Early the following year, Louis Berger and Associates, Inc. undertook an architectural survey of the Route 7 alignment, including Tweed's Tavern. Augmenting the existing survey information in the State Historic Preservation Office files, the report contained a concise description of the building. Although it was concluded that Tweed's Tavern was not eligible for the National Register it was recommended that the Phase II archaeological studies be accompanied by investigations to establish the nature and extent of the reported log structure concealed within the much-modified standing building (Bowers 1986:57-59; 80).

No further work was possible until 1996, when the Delaware Department of Transportation authorized Hunter Research to undertake additional archaeological testing at three intersections of Route 7, including the Tweed's Tavern Site at Valley Road. At this time, no testing took place at Tweed's Tavern because access was denied by the then owner, but it did prove possible to complete a substantial amount of historical research on the property, and an interim report was completed in March 1997 (Hunter Research, Inc. 1997).

It was not until 1999 that work finally began on the archaeology of the site and the architectural study of the building. The work was authorized in July of 1988, but it was not until the end of the year that the site finally became accessible. Archaeological and preliminary architectural investigations began early in 1999 with a geophysical survey. Archaeological investigation continued around the property until April, identifying significant archaeological resources on the north exterior of the building. Work on the building itself in February immediately showed that the log structure survived, and additional investigations in April produced sufficient evidence to confirm that Tweed's Tavern, together with the directly associated archaeological site, was eligible for the National Register. Assessing the building's construction meth-

ods and probing its surrounding grounds might reveal and obtain further information on the property and add value to the local history of the area. As such, the property was approached and treated under program that would satisfy architectural and archaeological documentation under the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). The program was proposed in May of 1999.

In August 1999 Hunter Research was authorized to begin a final phase of work, based on the May document. The project team was expanded to include Ortega Consulting, who provided an assessment of the feasibility of moving the building, Heite Consulting (for additional historical research), and John Milner Architects, Inc., who were to produce metrically accurate drawings of the building. Work began in September 1999 and continued through the fall. On October 2nd a public open day was held during which several hundred people were able to see both the archaeological excavations and the fully exposed log structure of the tavern. A preliminary report on the work was completed in February 2000 (Hunter Research, Inc. 2000).

In May 2000, the archaeological work at the Tweed's Tavern Site was honored with a Historic Preservation Award from the New Castle County Historic Review Board.

Also during May, preparations were made for removing the tavern to a temporary location a few hundred yards north on Route 7. Additional investigations were undertaken at that time, including partial excavation of a well beneath the porch on the eastern side of the house, and an unsuccessful search for a privy. Following the removal of the tavern a final few days of work were completed in difficult circumstances in late June of 2000, identifying foundations that probably represent the remains of the "cookery" mentioned in the early 19th century.

During 2000 and 2001 the artifacts from the project were processed and cataloged. It was anticipated that additional architectural recording would be undertaken following removal of the 20th-century additions to the tavern, but these remain in place to provide sup-

port for the log building at the time of writing. In December 2002 the preparation of this report was authorized by the Delaware Department of Transportation.

## C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research for this report was undertaken within the framework of the research program finalized in the December 2002 proposal. It comprises the following elements:

### 1. Historic Context Framework:

Using the scheme established in the *Management Plan for Delaware's Archaeological Historic Resources*, the main contextual setting of the analysis is as follows:

**Time Periods:** 1770-1830 Transformation from Colony to State; 1830-1880 Industrialization and Capitalization

**Geographical Zone:** Piedmont

**Research Domains:** Domestic Economy; Social Group Identity; Behavior and Interaction

**Historic themes:** Transportation, Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change, Architecture.

**Property Types:** Inns and Taverns, Farms

Within this general framework specific historic context statements on Log Dwellings in Delaware 1780-1860+ (Andrzejewski and Siders 1999), and on Mill Creek Hundred (Heite 1999) provided more specific information. It was proposed to develop a new context relating to the road system of northern Delaware as part of this project.

### 2. Research Themes

Several specific research topics were identified in the proposal, drawing from these contextual studies and from the wider literature on taverns and their role in 18th- and 19th-century society.

### *Taverns and the Road System of Northern Delaware*

As Heald's 1820 road map of northern Delaware makes clear, taverns were spaced along the highways leading from Newport and Wilmington on the Christiana River northwest into Lancaster County. The importance of highway location to the success of Federal period taverns has been highlighted in studies of taverns on the National Road in western Pennsylvania (Michael 1971; Michael and Carlisle 1976; Michael 1973, 1974), on the St. Louis-Vincennes Trace in Southern Illinois (Wagner and McCorvie 1992), and in Fayetteville, Arkansas (Martin 1977).

In Delaware the subject has also been partly explored in relation to Limestone Road and the Lancaster Pike. A National Register Eligibility Study of portion of the Lancaster Pike was completed by Bower and Benenson in 1988. Architectural and archaeological studies of SR 7 north of Milltown (Bowers 1986; Catts, Shaffer and Custer 1986) also discuss the issue.

It was therefore proposed to research the location, form and history of taverns along the main roads running northwest from the Ogletown-Stanton-Newport-Wilmington Road in Mill Creek and Christiana Hundreds as far as the Baltimore Pike in Pennsylvania (see attached map). These roads, from west to east, are:

Ebenezer Church/PollyDrummond Road (John Ruth Inn at Ogletown)

Limestone Road/SR 7 (Tweed's, Mermaid Tavern and Rising Sun)

Newport Turnpike/Route 41 (Jordan's Tavern)

Lancaster Pike/Route 48 (Murphy and Springer's Taverns)

Kennett Pike/Route 52 (Buck and Blue Ball Taverns)

The history and usage of these roads and their associated taverns would be studied using such sources as road returns and turnpike records and tavern licenses, addressing the following questions:

1. *When were the roads laid out?*
2. *What was the main traffic, and what services did that traffic require?*
3. *Which roads were turnpiked and when?*
4. *Did turnpiking influence the location, establishment and success of taverns?*

The taverns themselves would be compared in terms of size, form, material and method of construction, associated buildings, period of use, and occupants. The vernacular architectural aspects of the building was also to be considered with reference to studies by Bernard Herman and Gabrielle Lanier (Herman 1987; Lanier and Herman 1997), Henry Glassie (Glassie 1986) and others in the Mid-Atlantic region.

### ***The Tavern and the Community***

1. The tavern was to be characterized by comparing the 1823 inventory of John Tweed with that of other Federal period tavern inventories in New Castle County (Delaware State Archives). This was intended to provide a relative measure of the service provided at Tweed's Tavern. Selective comparisons would also be made with data from studies of contemporary non-tavern locations in the study area.

2. Using the architectural and archaeological data in conjunction with the 1823 and 1852 inventories the use of space in the tavern building would be analyzed in an attempt to establish the floorplans and functions of rooms on the four floors (including the basement and attic spaces).

### ***The Later History of the Property and the Preservation of the Building***

1. The life of the Giacomelli family in the house, as recalled by surviving family members, was to be researched through a short oral history project which will focus on their memories of the house and property from the late 1930s onwards.
2. The process that led to the preservation of the tavern was to be reviewed. This included the initiative of the Delaware Department of Transportation with the direction of local legislators, the role of public

involvement, Preservation Delaware, the Newcastle County Historic Review Board, the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association (GHADA), and the Hockessin Historical Society.

### ***The Tavern as an example of Delaware Log Architecture***

The 1999 context study by Andrzejewski and Siders provides a solid framework into which the Tweed's Tavern may be set. It is clear that log buildings were the norm in this part of Delaware until the second quarter of the 19th century or later and no particular significance is to be ascribed to this choice of materials and construction technique. It is nevertheless interesting that this building survived and most others were rebuilt.

### ***Dendrochronology sampling of the timbers to establish date of construction.***

### ***Comparison with other selected log buildings in the study area (Mill Creek and Christiana Hundreds) in terms of size, layout and construction technique, and interior and exterior finishes.***

These buildings were to be identified through consultation with the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, and the State Historic Preservation Office, Dover. The objective of this comparison was to use the evidence of the architecture to further assess the status and desired clientele of the tavern and compare this assessment with the archaeological and historic measures discussed above.

### ***The Material Culture of the Tavern***

Methodologies have been developed in historical archaeology for examining tavern assemblages, comparing them with each other and with assemblages from other types of sites. Studies include Rockman and Rothschild's 1984 comparison of rural and urban taverns, King's (1988) analysis of a 17th-century site at St. Mary's City, Bragdon's (1981) comparison of a farmstead and tavern in early Massachusetts, and Wagner and McCorvie's (1992) work in southern

Illinois. Also of relevance is Pearce's discussion of "clearance assemblages" associated with taverns in the London (England) area (Pearce 2000). Other tavern archaeological studies that may cover similar materials include examples in New Jersey (Hunter Research Inc. 1993; Research and Archaeological Management, Inc. 1990), Pennsylvania (Affleck 2000) and Charleston, South Carolina (Zierden et al. 1982). Nearby, work at both the John Ruth Inn and Rising Sun Tavern includes comparative analyses of this type. This project provided an opportunity to evaluate and apply these methodologies, and the results are presented in Chapter 6.

### **3. Curation of Artifacts and Records**

Artifacts and records from the project are being curated in accordance with the most current Delaware State Museum curation guidelines. Artifacts and records will be placed with the museum pending submission of the final report.